

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE WATER COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Water Commission convened in a regular session at 7:03 p.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2009 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Deemer, Haddon, McGee, Lew, and Chairperson See.

Absent: Commissioner Freeman.

Also Present: Public Works Director Beste and
Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich.

MOTION: Commissioner Deemer moved to grant an excused absence to Commissioner Freeman for the September 17, 2009 Water Commission meeting. Commissioner McGee seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Lew led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner McGee moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2009

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich noted the following corrections to the August 20, 2009 meeting minutes:

Page 2, Item 8A., paragraph 3, line 5: "...with a proposed bond of \$ million in 2011 to cover capital expenses for the first three years." and paragraph 4, line 2: "...that the first three years will be interest only and two years will be capitalized interest."

MOTION: Commissioner McGee moved for the approval of the August 20, 2009 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Freeman).

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC

None.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8A. PASS-THROUGH RATE ADJUSTMENT TO COMPENSATE FOR HIGHER WHOLESALE WATER COSTS, AND STATUS OF COMPREHENSIVE WATER RATE AND FUNDING STUDY

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich distributed Water Service Rate Adjustment inserts that will be included in water bills. He reported that the rate adjustment is an automatic pass-through to compensate for increases in water costs levied by Metropolitan Water District (MWD) for imported water purchases as well as higher groundwater pumping assessments charged by Water Replenishment District (WRD). He stated that the fixed meter charge will not change but the average bill will increase \$6.24 per month. He explained that a typical customer uses 14 billing units per month and there will be an increase of 44.6 cents per billing unit. He noted that this is the largest pass-through increase in several years and that MWD is projecting another adjustment of approximately 20% in January 2011.

He reported that staff is reviewing the first draft of the Comprehensive Water Rate and Capital Funding Study presented to the Commission in August 2009. He noted that the 7.5% increase will go into effect beginning January 1, 2010 and will require a 45-day comment period as required by Proposition 218. He stated that the first notification would be the end of October 2009 with the actual hearing in beginning December 2009 in Council Chambers. He added that there would also be an increase in refuse charges.

MOTION: Commissioner McGee moved to receive and accept staff's report as presented. Commissioner Lew seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Freeman).

8B. DEVELOPMENT OF LANDSCAPE WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE MANDATED UNDER STATE LEGISLATION

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich provided background on California AB1881 that mandates that municipalities adopt a Landscape Ordinance by January 1, 2010. He presented a draft model ordinance "Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance" dated May 7, 2009 developed by California Department of Water Resources to assist local agencies in developing their respective ordinances. He noted that cities not adopting an ordinance by January 1, 2010 will be regulated by the State's ordinance.

He stated that new construction and rehabilitation projects with 2,500 square feet or more of landscape would be subject to the ordinance. He explained that there would be several elements that include management and maintenance that must be developed before being granted landscape plan approval. He noted that the City can adopt its own ordinance as long as it meets the spirit of intent of the State ordinance. He noted that West Basin Municipal Water District plans to hold four workshops in October 2009, one for Southern California that will meet at MWD headquarters.

Public Works Director Beste noted that the City has few undeveloped areas and that the ordinance will affect mostly commercial lots, adding that the average landscape of most residential lots is 2,000 square feet.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich recommended setting up a committee to meet with staff, other Commissions, and a representative of the City Attorney's office to begin working on the ordinance.

Chairperson See suggested that the Water Conservation Committee, consisting of Commissioners Haddon, Lew, and Chairperson See, be assigned to the task.

MOTION: Chairperson See moved that the Water Conservation Committee's mandate include working on a Landscape Ordinance in conjunction with staff and other Commissions. Commissioner McGee seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Freeman).

8C. CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES PERTAINING TO CITY COUNCIL ASSESSMENT OF CITY COMMISSIONS

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich reported that an ad hoc Council Committee for Commission Review met on August 24, 2009 to initiate discussions for review of City Commissions, adding that several Water Commissioners were present at that meeting. He noted that History and Background of City Commissions, correspondence, Water Commission Annual Report 2008-09, Water Commission Work Plan, and Minutes from the August 24, 2009 meeting were included in agenda materials. He noted that staff costs are approximately \$27,000 per year and requested that Commissioners provide feedback and input to be forwarded to the Council Committee.

Commissioner Deemer raised the possibility of the Water Commission expanding into a Public Works Commission that would include oversight of all infrastructure and capital programs and, following a brief discussion, it was determined not to go forward in that direction.

In response to his inquiry, Public Works Director Beste advised that Public Works includes trash collection, road construction, storm drain compliance, sewer, and traffic signals. He stated that there would be few items that would ever come to the Commission, adding that the Water Department has a rate component. He noted that in the past staff has struggled to find significant items to bring to the Commission but that lately there have been several action items.

In response to Commissioner McGee's inquiry, staff conceded that there has been little public input since the last rate increase and that there are seldom complaints about water quality. They noted that water conservation is being intensified and they will need to involve the Commission more in outreach and education. They stated that the Commission is beneficial to the community, staff, and TMWD and that it is necessary to bring current information to Commissioners to help them make informed decisions.

Chairperson See stated that water is one of the world's most important commodities and that the Water Commission plays an important role.

Following discussion, it was the consensus of Commissioners to recommend that the Commission not merge with any other Commission and to schedule 12 meetings a year with the option to cancel a meeting if staff does not think it is necessary.

9. METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Beste stated that MWD Director Wright was at a conference and reported that MWD is currently working on its five-year employee union contract.

10. WEST BASIN WATER ASSOCIATION REPORT

Public Works Director Beste reported that the Water Master announced a 600 acre-foot increase in water production in West Basin compared to the same period in 2008. He stated that West Basin Municipal Water District reported on the State legislative Delta package. He reported that WRD finished monitoring the wells at Madrona Marsh Preserve and determined that the saline plume is moving in that direction. He noted that the Technical Advisory Committee met on September 16, 2009 to discuss the one-time purchase of Tier 1 water for the spreading grounds.

In response to Commissioner McGee's inquiry, he stated that TMWD has 5,600 acre-feet of water rights while Lomita has approximately 1,400.

A brief discussion centered on a special Legislative session regarding the Delta.

Responding to Commissioner Haddon's inquiry, staff stated that the last measurable rainfall was in April 2009 and offered to find out where rainfall is measured in Torrance.

11. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT REPORT

Public Works Director Beste reported that TMWD is meeting its goal and is not recommending any new restrictions.

MOTION: Commissioner Deemer moved to accept and file the Monthly Department Report as presented. Commissioner McGee seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Freeman).

12. ORALS

12A. Commissioner Deemer's shared information about the drought in South Australia.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 8:56 p.m., Commissioner Haddon moved to adjourn the meeting to October 15, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission meeting room. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McGee and, hearing no objection, Chairperson See so ordered.

Approved as Submitted October 15, 2009 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
